

Nenana, Alaska, November 24, 1919.

*copy made
for Dr. Marguin
fetus - Dr. L.*

Mr. Varian Banks,
156 Fifth Ave.,
New York, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Banks:- Just at the close of December my life insurance falls due over at the New York Life, and according to the arrangement agreed upon last winter they will send my notices to the care of the office at 156 Fifth Avenue, the premiums to be paid there from money that otherwise would be sent to me. Unless unusually good time is made by this letter it will not reach you till the very last of December. Thirty days each way is the best we can expect at this time of year, though sometimes we chance to get our letters out over the trail just in time to catch a southbound steamer in the harbor at Cordova. At such times we get them through to destination in pretty fair time. Your handling of my insurance last winter was a very nice arrangement for me. The registered communication I had sent to the insurance company was never recovered, as was the case with a score of other registered letters sent from this office in the same consignment of mail. Our mail all came and went as common freight last winter, to save Mr. Burleson's department a few dollars -- to the infinite disgust and inconvenience of all Alaskans, Congress and some of the departments do surely take the cake for density in affairs Alaskan. XThe department of Fisheries, with aid of Congressional enactment, allowed a floating cannary to be established at the mouth of the Yukon two years ago. We protested as soon as we heard of what had been done. It had all been done without Alaskans knowing it was even contemplated. There was a noticeable shortage of dried fish for work dogs and natives last winter. Last summer the Carlisle Packing Company made a big haul at the mouth of the Yukon, and now scores of work dogs are starving or mercifully being shot, because of the extreme shortage of that staple and necessary food - dried fish. On August 23 we sent a wire to headquarters, while the cannary was in operation. No fish were coming up the Tanana for the native villagers to catch. At present writing, the Bureau of Fisheries is sitting in Seattle to look into the Alaskan coast fishing matters, where colossal abuses have been going on for years. Alaska is being stripped naked by a set of vandals. Saturday night, our Nenana Commercial Club, of which I am secretary, sent the following wire to the Fisheries Bureau:

"The Nenana Commercial Club hereby urgently renews its emphatic protest of August 23 against further operations of Carlisle Packing Company at mouth of Yukon river. The enormously reduced supply of fish caught along Yukon and Tanana rivers has already caused loss of many work dogs, and threatens humans with like disaster."

It is a dead certainty that there will be many deaths from starvation in the isolated camps of natives along these two rivers this winter, if the winter should become severe or prove a long one like two years ago. Forty degrees below zero is the coldest yet this winter, which is very pleasant weather here. But dried salmon is the one great dog feed of this region and the improvident natives, who have always depended on it and prior to two years ago could get it in abundance by their nets and fish-wheels, are so short of the stuff that they have not enough for their own food, without giving any to the dogs. WHAT WILL THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES DO? Our little Commerical Club has been the agent of a number of important reforms in the Interior country here, and we are most earnestly hoping that the Bureau will listen. The powerful packing company has its lobby right in Seattle to tell to tell the Bureau what a lot

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of dunces we are, but we will wire Washington the facts as they come in concerning the starvation of natives, just as surely as one native starves on either river. That cannary deal at the mouth of the Yukon is a disgraceful reflection on that department. It was crooked as crooked can be, and they know it. *

Everything is now at a standstill here in railroad circles. Winter has shut down track operations. There will be some work done during the winter sixty miles south of Nenana, where the two tunnels must be put through. Nenana has a very small population just now, and will have a small population for a couple of years, or till the railroad is completed and connected up with the coast; then there will be a revival of business in this vicinity. We now have twice-a-week connections with Fairbanks via the narrow gauge road that has so recently been opened between these two towns. We get our mail that way now. Next year we hope to get it via the Road Pass, over the route the broad gauge road will traverse from the coast. That will be very much better and quicker. Everything hereabouts must wait on the completion of that coast-to-interior railroad. Mining had to stop because of cost of supplies. A can of powder that cost five dollars in the early mining days now costs the miner thirty-five dollars. Other supplies are about on a par with that. Clothing and groceries here are now from ten to twenty per cent higher than last year. You can see without aid of a pencil where the salaried man who is still on the living-wage salary of pre-war days is getting off. By curtailment of expenditures, making what one has on hand do, is the only way out. But our Board's men are game to a finish; I do not know a man who is in a mood to complain. We believe in the future of the country, and we know that the future of the country will be shaped to a large degree by wise handling of present matters. That article of Doctor Young's in the New Era for October is right to the point -- we have not nearly half so many people as we had two years ago; people cannot stay, and going under pressure of necessity as so many are doing, they suffer the loss of everything that they had gathered around them up here. A mere pittance of expenditure by Congress, if done in a businesslike manner, would save much of this outgoing population to Alaska. But thousands who would have come have been discouraged by the unbusinesslike methods of Congress, and the seeming inability or unwillingness of Congress to learn anything about Alaska. It is much simpler, and more easy and certain of accomplishment, to ship goods to China or India from New York, than to ship the same stuff from New York to Nenana. You pay no duties in shipping up here, but you get more papers before you get the goods landed here. This is a foreign country, according to our own Government's rating and rules. Everything has to be re-billed in Seattle, that comes to Interior Alaska, no matter how sure you are that you have it just right before it leaves little old New York. Congress could capture the Senegambian in that wood pile in five minutes, if Congress wanted to do so, or if Congress really wanted to give Alaska a square deal. But we are loyal to the United States Government up this way, all real Americans are, even if we do not think much of a number of our senators and mis-representatives. Pardon the long epistle. Very truly,

(signed) Robert Joseph Diven.

JAN 29 1920

W. Young
Dr. Young

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Nenana, Alaska, December 22, 1919.

The Rev. John Dixon, D.D.,
156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Dear Doctor Dixon:-

Your letter, also a letter from Mr. Banks containing a draft for six hundred dollars, and a letter from Dr. Young, came in the mail ~~just xxxxxxxx~~ that just arrived from the coast. No, I did not faint, but I surely felt greatly revived instead. I had never a doubt about the need's being duly met, but having the hard cash in one's hand is a great comfort these days. I am sure that all the men will appreciate the Board's kind remembrance in that raise in salary for the coming year. Mrs. Diven and I are facing dental bills that will exceed two hundred dollars, according to the present prospect, and now we can go ahead without having to ache all over whenever we think of the dental bill. Dentists do not work cheaply as in the States, where dentists are numerous. You can't get much done to a tooth here short of an expenditure of fifteen dollars.

I had sold my shot gun, also my boxing gloves and one of my pistols, to help relieve the pressure. I really did not need the things I sold, and the cash was more than acceptable. I still have my grand old six-shooter of horseback days in East Oregon, and will not think of parting with it. It is one of the best guns in the country, and I always have it hanging at my side when I go into the hills. I am very fond of shooting as an exercise.

I hope that you may see the two-part story that is to appear in QUEEN'S GARDENS, sometime this winter, entitled JACK FROST AND HER DOG. If my eyes would but stand the work, I could do a lot of that sort of thing, but they wont. That has to be taken just as a recreation, on Mondays. Though fiction, that story is true to the life of the country. I have a three-part mining tale now in progress. It, too, is designed to impart information as well as entertainment. At the request of the Blind Institution at Mount Healthy, Ohio, for use of one of my animal stories that appeared in Forward, I gave them free use of the whole bunch. They are now being put into New York Point for the blind to read. They have some of Henry van Dyke's stories, and several others of similar character. The blind seemed to enjoy my animal adventure tale so much that they asked for more; so, the management wrote to Forward asking for use of that tale. Mr. Faris wrote to me about it, and I wrote to the institution. It gives me great pleasure to think of those dear shut-ins seeing my beloved beasts, birds, mountains, rivers and deep canons, through the ends of their fingers.

Doctor Young is a great man to see things at long range -- bless his dear heart! But, the fellow who told him that this railroad will be finished next summer was drunk, or having a pipe dream, or just plum ignorant. The steel is laid to the north end of the first of a series of tunnels, sixty miles south of Nenana. It cannot be laid farther till the tunnels are bored. It will take at least two years to bore the tunnels. There can be nothing of much importance in railroading in or near Nenana till that is done. Then the materials for the big railroad bridge across the Tanana river will be hauled up over the new road. It will take close to two years to build that bridge after the materials are here. We must just sit tight and keep the parish work going in good shape, whatever betides. I am not disheartened, nor disgruntled, nor doubtful of the country's future. Alaska will come

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back as soon as she can, but that cannot be till the road is actually doing real railroad business clear to the Interior. That development down on the southern end of the road, in the Matanuska and Susitna districts will do us no good, whatever. Our town is nearly empty of men now, and it cannot be better soon, unless the Government actively enters on the great power plant project that has been asked for and recommended. I see that the Republicans are feeling that they are to save the country now, and it is to be done by saving the nation's money. Well, new things are sometimes interesting even though they prove to be but the merest mirage. But, we folks of the Northland wish Congress would once in a while remember poor old Alaska. For years Alaska has been paying into the national treasury more than two dollars revenue for every dollar the government has spent in caring for Alaskan interests; yet we are in worse shape, so far as real convenience and circumstances of development are concerned, than any of the islands of the sea that are under the government's supervision -- we are foreigners, the sport of the grafter and professional politicians to a shameful degree, and are not permitted to help ourselves. The new bill to provide money for development of educational facilities within the nation leaves Alaska clear out, just as before. Our inquiry has been answered from Washington, saying that it cannot be included so long as the Philippines are not included etc. etc. X If the winter turns cold, like two years ago, it will be my pleasant privilege to send some telegrams and letters to the Fisheries Department that will warm somebody's ears, for those letters will cite the cases of starvation of natives, due directly to the criminal activities of the packing company that the government permitted to open and operate at the mouth of the Yukon. Hundreds of work dogs have been shot already because of no dried fish to feed them. Natives will die, as surely as the winter becomes bad. The natives have been greatly favored by the winter thus far, and have secured unusual quantities of moose and caribou and wild sheep for food; but their staple food, dried fish, is lacking in all the camps. Our commercial club, of which I am secretary, is watching the matter closely. Our club was first to protest, two years ago, and we have been at it ever since. We got a hearing in Seattle, recently, when the committee from the Fisheries Bureau sat investigating complaints. *

But, why bother you with these things? We are just trying to do the best we know how in all these matters, and there are many such matters of which the people in the east know nothing and have no occasion to know; yet these very things are vital to Alaskan interests. Men cannot come to Interior Alaska as farmers till the railroad is operating and gives a rate on their equipment that a farmer can afford to pay. Miners cannot mine the gold till powder and other explosives come down in price, and food as well. Our population is now much less than half, for the whole Territory, what it was two years ago, because the people could not stay. Who is to blame? The same sort of people are to blame who used to curse us over on the coast because we were "spoiling" the natives; we were educating them in such a way that the exploiter could not work them seven days a week at just anything and everything and for wages that no white man could live on. The same people stole the fish from the Interior, with permission of our national congress. Is it any wonder it is hard to explain some things to natives and to the foreigner as you endeavor to talk up the great benefits of citizenship in our beloved land? With much love, and again thanking you for all your great kindness, I am, Fraternally,

Diven.

JUN 9 - 1920

Nenana, Alaska, May 13, 1920.

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
5494 College Avenue,
Oakland, California.

Dear Doctor:- This is just a note. Lucile and I are but recently out of bed -- flu. Nenana has had nearly three hundred cases. About FORTY deaths among citizens and twenty-odd among natives. Everything stopped suddenly. As chairman of local health board I had to move according to Territorial statute covering emergencies -- and that was some task. We took over the COONEY HOTEL with 74 beds. Next U.S. Commission Dormitory No. 1., with 24 beds. So many came down the next day that I had to order the big dormitory emptied, which gave us 70 more beds. Then I went down. My successor had to take over the Portland Hotel as a convalescent hospital. Getting a sufficient and efficient nursing staff for all these places was impossible, though that was entirely in the Doctor's hands. He could spare no help from the Government hospital force, and most of those nurses went down early with the flu. The Doctor showed clearly that he is no manager in emergency. He is a really great surgeon, but he loses his head when it comes to handling people. There is trouble ahead before everything is settled back to normal again. Doctor made himself extremely unpopular in this awful mixup, and he is a member of our health board -- of which I am chairman. Several thousands of dollars will have to be raised to cover the necessary heavy expenses of the whole affair. I have a plan that I am sure will go far to cover everything, but I will have a disgruntled and almost insane public to deal with, unless the professional grouches tame down first. A committee from Fairbanks (ten men) is now finishing off the nursing job here. There are not much above fifty cases remaining in the emergency hospitals. Two more died yesterday and one to-day. Pneumonia in each case. Among the deceased are Mrs. Cooney, Ralph Waechter, Mrs. Steele, Mrs. McLain and quite a number more whom you knew. Our poor little church is again ripped from stem to stern. Within a week we have lost over four hundred dollars from our end of the church's support for the year beginning April 1, and the end is not yet. As soon as we can have a public assembly we will have a service in memory of the dead. That will be held in the theater. One of the theater managers died, and the wife of the other partner. We had a much more severe form of flu than Fairbanks, or they made a better job of handling it. It came on us with a terrible rush, not a few people being taken right in the street and at their work. Mrs. Diven nursed Lucile and me through, using the chapel as a ward, and we were ready to take in others in case of overflow of provisions I had made up town. There are about a hundred cases out the line in the men's camp, but no deaths so far. The Fairbanks folks tell us that our windy location here is dead against the patients and all in favor of the pneumonia, and I am inclined to believe they are right. Had a letter from Mr. Marple. He seems glad to be headed for the coast -- bless his heart! He was very much disappointed in Fairbanks parish from the start. I think he will be a very fine man for Anchorage parish. He did good work in Fairbanks, I am sure, notwithstanding his surprise and disappointment on first reaching the field. Pardon the poor composition of this letter. I am very wobbly and weak. Just wanted to let you know how we are coming on, for I feared you would see that everything was tied up here, newspaper, telegraph office, stores etc. etc., which was the case, just because everybody was sick. Mrs. Diven and Lucile send cordial greetings. Very truly, DIVEN.

Dr. Dixon
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Nenana, Alaska, May 26, 1920.

Dear Doctors Condit, Dixon, Young:-

Just thirteen days ago I wrote the first letter, telling about the coming of the epidemic. The epidemic is now past, with a record of nearly five hundred cases, native and white, and over sixty deaths -- 36 whites and 27 to 30 natives, with a few critical cases still in the hospital and some deaths almost certain. The white deaths will surely exceed forty by the time all returns are in. You can imagine something of the situation now prevailing in this camp. Dr. Smith rode his high horse so successfully that he now sees that he should leave Nenana. He has resigned, to go as soon as a successor can be secured.

The Engineer-in-charge here has presented bills for every lick of work his men and machinery did during the epidemic, even to the coal consumed in the engines that hauled the dead out to the cemetery two miles south of town. His scheme is clear to us, namely, that he expects to get either the town or the Territory to pay to the Engineering Commission such a sum as will leave the Commission clear of all expense in taking care of Government employees while sick. But the scheme will not work. The bulk of the expense should come from the Commission, for the bulk of the patients came from there, the proportion being 2 to 1. I see where there is infinite trouble ahead, unless we who must handle the matter can be given grace enough to be WISE as serpents and HARMLESS as doves, in the proportion of two snakes to one bird. I have been forced to lose all my faith in both Mears and B.D. Browne, so far as any disposition to deal fairly with their men is concerned. They belong to the slave-driver type of humans. They make fine promises and seemingly make no attempt to make their promises good -- as one very simple and recent example: The promised raise in wages, "which, we are sure, will be satisfactory to all and just to everybody," amounted to a raise of seventy cents per day. They at the same time raised the price of board at the mess house fifty cents a day, leaving the men twenty-five cents a day better off -- that is, the men who eat at the mess. They increased the prices of Commissary stuff to a degree that leaves the married men no better off than before, notwithstanding the fact that prices of the necessities of life had increased here from FORTY to ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY per cent since any raise had previously been granted. This last raise is but adding insult to injury. These figures I have quoted are official figures on prices and wages. For example, it cost the Engineering Commission \$4400.00 to blast the graves for the dead and haul them two miles and bury them. It was the only way the work could be done, because of dire shortage of help in our extremity. Soup for patients at the dormitories during two weeks, made in the Commissary mess and carried from there, is to cost us over \$1100.00.

Now, we know that the Territorial government will never reimburse the Federal Government for taking care of Federal Government employees when sick. We know that the terms of employment under this Commission make provision for bearing all expenses incident to caring for such employees. Browne is trying to put something over on us, and we are going to try as wisely as he to turn the tables. The community is in a bad frame of mind. The doctor is just as popular as the head of the Commission, and I shall not be a bit surprised to hear a roar pretty soon, that will mean a demand from the higher-ups that Browne be removed, too. As chairman perforce of the health board and consequently chairman of the FLU COMMITTEE of citizens, I may be needing a new location to which to go as soon as the dust of battle clears away. I'd surely be glad of a change and a rest,

Smith

but I would not be willing to leave till everything is cleared up and the community settles down again to a state of something like sanity. The total bills, as figured by F.D. Browne, not allowing anything for nursing and several other local expenses, amount to nearly twenty thousand dollars. Accepting his figures as correct, the town's proportion would be \$6842.00. He wants the people to ask the Territory for the bills as he has them figured. CAN you beat it? Do you wonder that I predict trouble ahead? But we shall see what we shall see. I believe that the Federal Government would resent what he has suggested, and we will not hesitate a minute to put it all up to Washington if Browne and Mears refuse to hear the community's case. We are bankrupt now, so far as a town is concerned, due to the Commission's own mistakes. As a town we are still dominated by the Commission and must continue so till the five year period shall have passed and everything formally turned over to the people.

When I wrote my letter of thirteen days ago we had lost four hundred dollars from our 1920 subscription list. When I wired Kenneth in Philadelphia on the 21st of May, we had lost over six hundred. Dr. Smith's resignation taking out twenty dollars a month for eleven months. He had paid his April pledges, but there it ends. His return to Nenana has not been a financial success for him. I am trying to help him get in touch with a good location in the States now, where he can give his whole time to surgery and do no doctoring. He is not a physician. He IS a surgeon.

I fear that the flu will penetrate to the remote settlements before it runs its course. It is one of the things war has ~~ex~~ scattered over the whole world, spreading it from its age-long habitat in western Asia. I have no doubt it is "THE SWEATING SICKNESS" Victor Hugo speaks of in his great novel, which overran France and other parts of Europe during the French revolution. That it is the same malady Homer describes in one of his books I feel quite sure, and it has also ravaged some parts of Europe under different names for many centuries. The human family must give more time to keeping house. Instead of making the furnishings of certain rooms excessively rich and imposing, while leaving other parts in darkness and wholly unkept so as to breed pollution and pestilence, we must see that the inhabited portions of our globe are fumigated and purged of all such things. Witness what eliminating the mosquito has done for yellow fever, malaria etc., also the eradication of small pox etc. Enough ~~money~~ wealth was blown away in the late war to have banished the ancient famine-demon from the habitable globe. All irrigible desert lands in the present inhabited globe could have been put under the life-giving touch of the irrigation ditches by much less than two hundred billion dollars. The equivalent of an American school house, with teacher and all, could have been set up in every opportunityless neighborhood in the inhabited parts of the earth by much less than that, to say nothing of the benefits of simple religious teaching that such a sum would make possible everywhere. No, we have builded our cities and great monuments of one sort or another and prided ourselves on the conviction that God was going to keep us free from pestilence etc., and never seemed to think that we were permitting the pestilence to harbor on our borders and that God has no covenant with anybody to keep it away under such circumstances. Many very good people are blaming all this carnival of wretchedness and loathsomeness on the clean hands of our Heavenly Father. He gave us an earth to keep and keep in order. We have let too much of it go unkept, and fast germinating pestilence has frequently leaped our boasted walls and laid us waste. We placed the blame on God, tried to be very penitent

for a little while, but took no sane measures looking toward world house-keeping. If a man will not take an interest in clearing out the flea-infested rats ~~xxxx~~ from his community when he knows that those fleas are the arch-spreaders of bubonic plague, I regard it as an awful travesty on prayer for such a man to attend prayermeeting and volubly beseech our God to keep him from being bitten and smitten. I do not believe God is interested in chasing fleas off such people -- and the folks who are that man's neighbors may by his carelessness be jeopardized. We must wake up to realize that God's command to Adam to keep his earth in order was no silly bit of instruction. We must begin to sweat over the fact that we are responsible for our fellow men's woes up to the full measure of our neglect, whether it is our neglect in India or in America. Man made the war and man is the sufferer; and it looks like man was dead set on making lots more war a certainty. Other good people are saying that it is no use trying any more; just wait till Jesus comes and He will iron all these things out smooth -- and not least of all give to the wicked just what has been coming to them for a long time. Pardon this seeming digression from the original topic. But I believe in prayer, in the never-failing love and mercy of God the Father and in the saving grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ -- also I believe in education for all people, in eradicating mosquitos, killing rats and consigning war and war-makers to the discard for ever and ever..... And just remember, in connection with my early remarks, that Doctor Smith is one of my two remaining elders now in Nenana, and Engineer-in charge F.D. Browne is chairman of my board of church trustees. If you have the ear of our Father any time soon, just speak a word for the preacher of Grace church. If I come through the present situation in Nenana, I will have reason to be very happy; that is, if I come through with the confidence of my townsmen to such a degree that I may still remain here, -- it can be only through the grace of our Heavenly Father and not through any wisdom of my own.

Fraternally and very cordially,

Robert Joseph Divers

P.S. This whole affair has not been without its humorous incidents, one of which I feel constrained to tell about:-- One good lady here, boasting much wisdom and refinement, when she saw that she must help nurse the sick, made a pulp of raw onions and inclosed them in her mask. Aside from being for half a day a sore trial to her patients, she was blistered and poisoned by the onion juice to such a degree that she looked worse than the witch of Endor after being clawed by a spook of her own conjuring. To make the joke worthwhile, she did not get the flu and now ardently advocates the crushed onions in the mask as a sure preventive.

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JUN 18 1920

P.S.

May 27, 1920.

Since writing the accompanying letter yesterday, word comes from both above and below town that a number of natives have died. Not a few natives and whites stampeded out of town at the first outbreak of the flu and eight natives have just been found dead below town, close to the river -- unmistakably it was flu they had carried with them and when it was too late to return for treatment they had to die. I have no doubt that many a lonely cabin, where some frightened native or white man thought he would isolate himself and so escape the flu, will be discovered as people begin to hit the trails again. It is probable that the present quarantine regulations, designed to prevent the flu being carried to the distant settlements of miners and native villages will stay on all summer. All travelers going to such neighborhoods will have to stay in a detention tent five days before entering a camp or village. But, the way returns are now coming in from outlying places, it has spread among the natives quite generally now. As soon as possible men will be sent with medicines and help to visit all the villages and camps to see what the situation really is. The recent finds of dead natives will bring Nenana's present total up to, or above, eighty. Two more of the old pneumonia cases died in the hospital last night.

R.J.D.

Dr. Dixon
JUN 30 1920

Nenana, Alaska, May 31, 1920.

My dear Doctor Young:-

Your letter of April 29th is at hand at last. We have surely been privileged to try Mr. Burleson's wonderful mail service up to a point where conclusions may be made reached very impartially.

I feel a bit uneasy about that proposed exploring trip of yours. The flu is liable to be encountered almost anywhere. We have no reports yet from the Kantishna and Lake Minchumina regions. We have tried to keep the pest from being carried into those outlying regions, but quite a number of men, both natives and whites, stampeded by night from this locality and scattered as they chose. Already quite a number of dead natives have been found not far from town, who evidently had one or more infected men in the company when they left town. I fear that many lonely cabins, tenanted only by dead men, will be found as the summer advances. It was so around Nome after the first outbreak there. There is no reason to suppose it will be different hereabouts. I know it will be a great disappointment if you are led to give up the trip this summer. It will be a disappointment to us who are left in Nenana. There isn't much left of the little church now. The town will revive only when the bridges are being built and the road begins to operate from the southern end as far as here. But somebody must keep the church work going, and I suppose I may as well do it as anybody.

In my letter of a few days ago I spoke of the jackpot my elder, Dr. Smith, had put himself in by his quick tempered methods during the flu. Now it is my Chairman of church trustees, Engineer F.D. Browne, who is in hot water. Last week he issued an order suspending all Sunday work on the road, which would reduce the monthly income of the laborers by nearly twenty-five dollars a month. They would have to pay their board bill at the messhouse just the same as if they were working. The net result of the order would leave nearly all the laborers worse off financially than before the recent raise.

Our Commercial Club at once took the matter up, since the workmen here have no union or any sort of organization to speak for them, nor are they nor we anxious to have any such thing here. As secretary of the Club I had to call Mr. Browne up and ask him if he would give his reason for the startling order, also its origin. Now, I knew that they had never worked on Sundays on the southern end of the road. I also knew that the order to refrain from Sunday work was as old as the Engineering Commission, but that the order had never been put into effect up here. Well, Mr. Browne said he was putting it into effect now because he believed that nobody should work on Sunday, and because the men had been sick and were not able to work seven days in a week. He also reminded me that our Club was opposed to Sunday work. I then reminded him that we were surely opposed to the Sunday work, but that the order as it stands makes the men worse off than before; in other words, puts a penalty on them for accepting his generous thought in regard to their moral and physical wellbeing. He wanted to know if I, as a minister, would recommend Sunday work. I told him that my policies as a citizen and minister and Club man are identical; that I am opposed, as always, to Sunday work excepting in works of necessity and mercy; that the men and the Club would have nothing but commendation for his order if he would see that the men get enough in six days work to live on and rest on one day in seven. Just then word came over the wire that the men on the north side the river had quit, on account of the order we were discussing. By noon next day the foolish order was rescinded, and the men are now about to ask time-and-a-half for Sunday work. With that request I have nothing

whatever to do, though it is a just request and should be made, for the men here are engaged on exactly the same terms as on the southern end, excepting that they are promised ten per cent more here than there. They have never received extra for Sundays or overtime here. Browne has cut their rights wherever and whenever he could find a chance. That benevolent explanation about why he was now for the first enforcing the no-Sunday work order only made the men smile. Two or three months of that order would save out of the laborers' wages enough thousands to pay the big flu bill that Mr. Browne is pretty sure his department will have to pay. But the order, if he had not promptly rescinded it, would have tied up his whole construction work in here -- and he is chairman of my board of trustees, a mighty good chairman, but more than unpopular just now. And I feel sure that he would be glad to have some more gullible man for his minister just now, too. I'm not complaining about having all this sort of thing to deal with, but it is only just to you men of the Board, to the field here, and to myself that the situation should be put clearly before you. I have tried to give as capable leadership as I could to the religious and moral forces of the community, also to the social and labor matters, for I believe that the church is the only organization in existence that is really advocating ~~the~~ a workable solution for the many serious problems that vex the world. Every office outside the actual office of the ministry has been thrust upon me here -- president of school board, chairman of board of health, secretary of Commercial Club, and now chairman of the Menana flu committee. It will take all summer to get things straightened out, I see, but I'd be very glad of a rest after that glad hour arrives. If I were sure you could send a man who would bring enough enthusiasm with him to take root in such poor soil as this, I'd feel like asking to be transferred, at the latter end of the summer, to some cool, green spot over on the coast. Since giving Chief Engineer Browne such a gentle jacking up as I did over the telephone last Friday night, on that Sunday work order, I am sure he would favor a change for me. But, notwithstanding all the good reasons for desiring a rest, such a rest as would come with a change of parish, I prefer most to remain right here till everything is ironed out smooth again, following the flu. Mr. Browne may withdraw his eight dollars a month support from the church if he wishes to do so, also his membership and his services. There will be not a few people attend church then who will not attend as long as he has anything to do with its affairs, and such people probably need the church as much as he does. He will be in the canyon all summer, and I'd wager he'll treat me fine every time I go out to see the men.....

Yes, I believe you can get a Racine canoe here from the N.C.Co. They have them in Fairbanks, I am told. Yes, you can get competent guides here. You can get from here to the Kantishna by gasoline boat all summer, if present plans mature among the boat men. The menace of flu is your one big problem this summer, for it is a humdinger of a brand of flu we got here... I hope you had a good time at Assembly. We have not yet heard from the boy, of course. We do not yet know what his summer plans are.

Don't worry a bit about us. We will be right here when you arrive, and mighty glad to see you and let you bite yourself with a few of our mosquitoes. You won't find better mosquitoes anywhere.

Very cordially,

Given

JUL 23 1920

D. Dixon
Rev. John Dixon, D.D.,
156 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

D
Nenana, Alaska, July 5, 1920.

3
My dear Doctor Dixon:-

We have not yet heard from the
lad about his delightful experiences at Assembly, but to-morrow's mail
will probably bring us his letters.

A letter from Doctor Condit, announcing his departure for the Arctic,
assured me that the salary matter would be all right if I remain here
another year. Your letter relative to the same matter also came to hand,
and I want to assure you of my deep appreciation. If we can do better
than now seems possible we will surely do so. There is no promising out-
look as yet. We now know there will be no high school possible here this
year and that we can have but one teacher in our fine, big public school
building. Doctor Condit also said to write you and say just what I wished
in case some necessity made my removal to another field wise before fall.

So far we are coming on as well as could be expected with settling up
the flu troubles in the community, and we will make through, I believe; but
I hope I may never again be so handicapped by being unavoidably linked up
with such a situation -- chairman by election of Health Board, also Chairman
of the Citizens' Committee on flu bills and settlements. The Doctor has
gone, and the Chief Engineer, chairman of my trustees, stayed out of town all
through the Fourth of July celebration just because he knows he is so much
disliked. Doctor Condit wanted me to go to CORDOVA, and I would appreciate
getting a crack at those men over there; but unless something impossible of
settlement here develops I will stay right here till next summer. These
people need some pretty strong handling at times, and I still have their con-
fidence and would probably lose it if I were to go before they get settled
down to normal thinking again. Church work, as purely church work, will not
make much of a showing, for nobody knows what anybody will do a week hence.
I would not go to Fairbanks as a settled minister, for this town is just as
spunky toward that town as that town is toward this town -- jealousy and
the feeling that this town should never have happened. I would like to have
you bear this in mind, however, that if our delightful old parish over in
Sitka is in need of a minister next spring, as it has been intimated to me
may be the case, you will please remember me. I'd be glad to spend five more
years over there, or longer if the members of Alaska Presbytery would not
adjudge me "queer in the head" like workers among the natives are all sup-
posed to be after that length of service. I shall not expect to remain here
beyond next summer, the end of my four years. Very cordially, *Dixon*

Nenana, Alaska, Nov. 8, 1920.

My dear Doctor Dixon:-

It is because of my interest in the matter dealt with in the accompanying carbon ~~xxxx~~ letter that I am sending it to you, also a carbon to Dr. Young. I also wrote a short letter to Dr. Young, which I requested him to take to you when you confer over the matter of my chance for going to Assembly next May. It was Mr. Marple who suggested it. I have never taken the interest in getting a chance to go to Assembly that I have seen many men take. On the other hand I have given up my chance even after having been elected, that some other man might go, some man who would be decidedly advantaged by the opportunity. The unspeakably cheap wire pulling sometimes (at least a few years ago) witnessed in some Presbyteries, put all thought of a church court out of mind. If the plans suggested are not workable from the Board's standpoint, then forget it right away, please. I do not want to be made an exception nor be considered one who thinks he should have special favors shown. I am in a position, however, to appreciate very fully any assistance the Board may see ~~xxxx~~ their way clear to grant..... Please hand the inclosed NINE DOLLARS to

Mr. Banks, with the information that it comes from me, to be applied as he suggested in his recent letter, on church insurance. We have no funds yet for any such extras but may have after the turn of the year when we re-organize our depleted official boards and take new stock of the situation.

The Fairbanks people paid my expenses for all trips up there excepting

the last one, which was nearly as expensive as all the others combined. I had to remain four nights and three days, and as the manse was cold and damp I took the only safe procedure and went to a hotel. They have not yet paid the fourteen dollars that visit cost me. All my other trips amounted to only twenty dollars, because there were no hotels bills and I helped out in boarding myself. They are in hard lines financially. If they do not voluntarily repay me, I think I would better let you do as you suggested, pay the bill from New York. Do not ask them for it, unless they offer it. They talked about extra money for my services, but I never thought anything would come of that. I was right. Nothing more has been said. Their money is scarce. With fraternal greetings and much love to everybody-

DEC 6 - 1920

in this division.

Nenana, Alaska, Nov. 8, 1920.

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
Juneau, Alaska.

(writing from town)

My dear Doctor:- I have been waiting to hear if you got back safely from your far northern voyage. Our local paper reported some weeks ago that your vessel was stuck in the ice. We have heard nothing since that. We are well and busy as ever, and happy though not one of the elect. I made no campaign whatever, and to my surprise the home town paid me a very gratifying compliment, the hooch makers and bootleggers the while doing their best to make my vote a veritable joke. With only 79 bonafide donkey voters in Nenana I polled 157 votes in Nenana alone. The aforementioned element was both mad and alarmed as returns began to be given out, for they saw they had failed and that had I made any campaign at all I would have easily landed the highest vote of any man on either ticket. You see, I have not been sure of the local feeling toward myself since the terrible upheaval of last spring's flu scourge. I have had to butt into a number of people pretty hard and pretty often since then, as chairman of the flu committee and chairman of health board. I have had to cross swords with the local head of the Commission, who is chairman of my church trustees. Well, I feel very grateful to the Nenana public for that vote of approval, for that is what it meant. They knew, and I knew, that everything would be Republican in the Division when all returns were in. I am expecting as good a winter's work as anybody might expect in a community that is just now hanging to the map by its eyebrows. You already know our public school had to drop down to one room; that where we had thirteen hundred people three years ago we now have three; that Catholics and Eddyites are vastly in the majority hereabouts, the Catholics recently adding to their number by the changes in the Northern Commercial Company's management and force. I expect to receive two new members soon. Sunday school has every child who is not in Catholic care or kept from attending any Sunday school by the Eddyites. Their Sunday school went dead long ago, just as I said it would do, but they will not permit their children to go to any other.

So the work moves along, and I am trying to meet the demands of each new situation that comes along with the changes. Mrs. Diven escaped the flu last spring, but she had the flu-grip that visited this region in September, was in bed eight days, is now quite well, and on her way to San Diego to spend the winter with her sister. She will visit the old home in Pennsylvania next spring before returning to Alaska. I do not know if you are aware that Mrs. Diven has not seen her home folks for fourteen years. Also that she has never had the assistance of a dollar of Home Board money in getting to see her people when she did go fourteen years ago, though I was then as now in the service of the Board. When we came here we were under agreement to stay at least three years. That time is now up, and I have no desire to leave before next summer, and then will not leave if it seem wisest to remain here. I would rather go to the coast again because of climate. The new rules governing vacations will cut us out of any help from the Board again, unless I stay here five years, for I suppose the Board cannot make exceptions even though the necessity may be great. If I had not been earning a little money on the side these past two years, I would have been forced to borrow money to enable Mrs. Diven to go outside this fall. My salary has kept us out of debt and paid my insurance. Every dollar we have laid by, all of which and more, will be consumed by the trip now in progress, was saved from outside earnings, earnings outside work hours.

The Commercial Club was the largest and easiest source of revenue, and all that work was done at times when parish work could not be done -- at night. Night school brought in some, but not enough to pay for the wear and tear on eyes. That work was also at night. A few little stories, also written either on Mondays or at night, helped. I do not know if Mr. Marple delivered my message to the Board, to the effect that it would be ~~short~~ little short of a crime for the Board to inveigle any man to take my place here for less than two hundred a month, if he has a family, and if I should have to leave the field. Every missionary should have a salary large enough that he could save a tidy little sum annually from his salary ~~each year~~. I know that sounds out of tune with the tearful old pleas of years ago, when missionaries were expected to be miserable and draw great grace and wisdom and efficiency from their very poverty and weakness. The church at large has wept tears of pity over their servants while they have prayed for them, and then left wages with the Lord. Most missionaries have been both poor and humble. The church at large very piously undertook to keep them poor and trusted the Lord to keep them humble. Pardon this digression, but I have had twenty years service myself, the most joyous service a man might hope to have in such work, and have no regrets except for the enforced poverty of the general run of missionaries in the homeland. It will be easier for us from now to the close of the years of active service, for the children will take care of themselves. One is married and the other will soon take care of himself. What I have said above is for the next generation of Home Missionaries. Pay them like men are paid if they are to be required to render the services of well-fed men and free. If anything can be done, which I have no reason to expect, unless on the basis of long service without bonuses or extras or trips for health etc., it will be gladly accepted.

Mr. Marple writes me, and it is his suggestion originally, that he will be quite pleased to have me take his turn at Assembly next May, and he take my turn the following year. That would be most agreeable to me, for I could see the son, now in Chicago University, then go on with Mrs. Diven to a reunion of her old class in Grove City College in June. Perhaps I might be able to do such lecturing for the Board as would justify them in defraying my traveling expenses while not at Assembly. I'll be more than willing to fit into any plans like that they may make. I have written Mr. Marple telling him that his suggestion would be a very happy one for me and for my scattered family and old friends. I could be away from here the whole summer without any great detriment to this work. Nearly everybody was out of town this summer, and it will be worse next summer, and till the road is completed and they haul in the materials for the big bridge here. Then the town will fill up again with men for a year. Please let me hear from you on the Assembly matter, for an early assurance of going will greatly assist me in making my plans. Were I to go, perhaps the Fairbanks man can visit this parish occasionally in my absence.

In your letter you spoke of receipts for expenditures in going to the canyon. I will see that your office gets an itemized bill for all such expenditures, but no original receipts will be available from the railroad, for they give no receipts excepting those provided for in their own printed regulations. I got a look like I might have been a crazy man when I asked for one. The hash slinger at the canyon nearly burned a perfectly good apron off his round tummy while trying to get an idea as to why I should ask a receipt for money I had paid him for food he had seen me eat, and I gave it up. I knew that if I explained too much, and he should savvy that somebody else was paying the bill instead of my own pocket, the bill would be just fifty per cent larger. Such is life. May the Lord help us to live it fully and cheerfully.

I hope you are having abundant success in your work. I am now hoping soon to see the balance of \$5600.00 flu bills paid by Jan. 1921. Fraternally, *Diven*

12/27/20
D
Nonana, Alaska, Nov. 26, 1920.

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
Juneau, Alaska,

My dear Doctor Condit:-

In a recent letter I mentioned the fact that the Fairbanks folks had not yet repaid my expenditures of last summer. Just now a check for twenty dollars has come to hand, which overpays me by six dollars. They had given me twenty dollars at one time before. My total outlay in serving them was thirty-four dollars. I have been receiving my salary from the Board and the local bit from my church on salary right along, and just what to do with the six extra dollars is not clear to me. I could easily spend it and forget all about it, and that may be what will happen before a reply can come back as to what to do with it; however, I feel that I should report the matter to you and the Board. I will do whatever you folks say to do with the six bones. I had not expected to receive any more than exactly my expenditures.

Good reports are coming from the new folks up there, and I will go up to see them in the Christmas holidays if I can get away. Poor old Nenana is flatter than ever, more camps being closed and continued withdrawal of office forces from here. The community registered a kick in Washington on the obvious evasion of property agreements etc., but all it has done is to stir up more ill feeling. The mass meeting that registered the kick appointed me on the citizens committee, and I was down in night school. The kick that was wired to Washington was written by the U.S. Commissioner, but it was so like my sort of English that the heads of the Commission are asserting that I wrote it. I am sorry I cannot claim the honor this time. Life in Nenana is surely something worth experiencing -- if there is not too much of it at a time. I think this whole works will be tied up soon by congress, while the investigate the grounds for making the new and very large appropriations that will surely be required to get even the ends of steel together. All we can do is just to wait. Meanwhile the country is fast going kxxxxx plum to the dogs. People cannot stay and are going every day. Secretary Payne is now beginning to get worried. Lane should have worried long ago, but never seemed to savvy. With cordial greetings. Very truly,

Nenana, Alaska, Dec. 21, 1920.

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
Juneau, Alaska.

My dear Doctor:- Your letters of December first and third came to hand last night. In reference to a transfer to Wrangell, if that should seem the wise thing to do, let me say: I would in some ways prefer to be in Wrangell. I know my wife would choose the rainy climate of the coast in preference to the long and severe winters of this region. I could not wisely leave here, nor do so without greatly increasing my personal expenses, before navigation opens next spring. Our Sunday school is now doing its best work, and will be active and useful till the summer months come. After that time no man can say what will happen to Nenana. If I were to go away, with the outlook as it is at present, there would be little or no wisdom in sending a stranger here for at least another year. The thing I would prefer to do, personally, would be to stay right here till the road is open to the coast. But, whether I stay or a new man comes, this parish will not be able to do more than pay for local upkeep of property and fuel and light etc. etc. till the big bridge is actually in course of construction. It is now definitely known that that will not be done till the Commission can haul their materials in from the south via their railroad -- and only divine foresight may name that date.

Perhaps you know already, that the new survey for a bridge approach starts a few miles south of Nenana and comes out on the river at the Mission, just at this end of the Indian village -- where the town should have been originally located. When that bridge is built and trains in operation from the south, Nenana will not be on the railroad at all, by half a mile, and most of it a great deal farther away than that.

The remove and shut-down orders are now being executed. The large office building will be closed, even the disbursing office has been removed to the camp south of the bridgeless Nenana river. Browne has a steam-heated house out there that is larger than the fine cottage he was occupying over on the Government reserve. The local store is reduced to a camp store, open one day a week. The dormitories are nearly deserted. There is a rumor that the power plant too will be shut down to save expense of running, but I do not credit that rumor. The Commission, after foisting wide and expensive streets on the property owners, and a costly school house, an absurdly expensive and inadequate fire hall etc. etc. is now sliding out from under, clearly showing that they never intend to make good their original agreements. No central power plant has been undertaken for this district. The original Nenana coal has not made good. The present coal, from the new mine at Healy is not making good. This fall we equipped our school house with a heater to burn coal. The coal was costing us almost double what the wood cost for the same weather conditions and length of time. We met as a Board and switched back to wood last week. Many people are doing likewise. As a fact, there is not yet any REAL COAL in sight. Millions of tons of lignite and black dirt are in plain sight in the hillsides, but NO COAL. What the future will bring forth I shall not attempt ~~to~~ to predict. It is Interior Alaska all over again, in both disappointments and and buncombe in administration of its development enterprises. I still think Fairbanks will be the headquarters of the road as well as northern terminal. Recently Browne and his knocker for the Commission made a visit to Fairbanks and won over the editor, Thompson, who surely gave them a great puff, instead of his usual knocks.

I do not know how much they paid him for blowing their whistle and knocking Nenana, and publishing the prophecy of its future, very much as I have just outlined it on the other side of this sheet. Browne will no more reside in Nenana. Nenana is no longer headquarters for the road at this end. Healy, the camp at end of steel to the south, is now headquarters. But that is only a most temporary arrangement, made necessary by the Commission's rank failure to put the bridge over the little Nenana river so they could have unbroken connections with Nenana at all seasons. HEALY will never be a town, for reasons geographical, geological and climatic. There is where they are in trouble with their first tunnel. They say they will run trains through and beyond there in 1921. We will know more of that some months hence. The same men said we would be going all the way to the coast early in 1920.

Our flu committee, of which I am still chairman, paid three thousand dollars of the bills last week. There remains the sum of twenty-one hundred to pay. That should all come from the Indian department, and will, if Browne and Mears play fair with us. I cannot feel sure of anything they have anything to do with, since the fat job they tried to put over on the community in settling the flu bills. It was my unpleasant duty to butt into the buncombe and try to save the community. Of course I am in bad with Browne and Mears. Someday I will send you a carbon of the account sheet they finally presented. It is a fine study, though it has been shorn of nearly six thousand dollars of pure unadulterated padding. One item slipped by them till after the sheet got into my hands. It was their charge of \$762.50 for coal to run the engine and one car on seven round trips to the cemetery, two miles distant from town, with the dead. It was never the intention of Browne that I should see the account sheet on which they figured the town's share of the flu expenses. But as soon as I got that, I went to him and took up the matter of securing help for the town in paying bills of those who had died without estate or cash, whose bills had all been saddled onto the town's side of the account. But he smiled and assured me I would never get any such aid from the Territory unless the Commission were also reimbursed for similar expenditures. I assured him that the Territorial government would surely never reimburse the Federal government for outlays of money the Federal government had already provided for that use. I flatly refused to combine our appeals for aid. Well, we got to a dollar what I asked, via the Governor of Alaska. Browne was mad as a wet hen, of course. Next I asked him if he would approach the Indian Bureau for return of moneys paid for the local Indian village. This was also assessed against the town of Nenana. To make a long story short, I asked him how that coal bill would look to an expert in figures, especially since he was hiring special trains from Nenana to Fairbanks and return for \$150.00, which included train crew and coal, while to run ~~twenty-eight~~ miles, even allowing eight full hours to make the round trip of four miles, he was charging us \$109.00 per trip for coal alone, with a full day's wage added each trip for train crew. He was mad some more. At the price they were paying for coal, the poor fireman was shovelling over two tons an hour, allowing eight full hours for each round trip of four miles. Well, that little study in figures lost me Browne's church subscription, but the matter is in the hands of the Indian Bureau right now. Here's hoping we get the money and don't have to scrap any more. Do you wonder I would appreciate a change of scenes and associations? You know the Town-Commission fight was already fat and flourishing when you came in here with me. It still lives and will die only when the Commission is gone for keeps. God speed the day! With best wishes and regards to the family. *John*

1921 FEB 21

4
Nenana, Alaska, Jan. 28, 1921

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
Juneau, Alaska.

My dear Doctor Condit:-

As soon as your letter came saying that Doctor Spence had come out from Barrow and that it was his turn to go to Assembly, I dismissed the Assembly idea that Brother Warple had put into my head. As you very well know, I have never had a symptom of Assembly itch. (Dr. Matthews seems not to have recovered from his bad attack even after becoming Moderator. People up here really think he is the head of the Presbyterian Church, a sort of pope or something, because every time they see his name in the papers there is appended the ancient legend, Moderator of General Assembly.) Well, -- pardon the digression -- Warple suggested it and it hit me just right, and I passed the good idea on to the Board at the same moment I wrote you about it, because it takes so insufferably long a time for mail to get out and back. At that time I knew nothing about Doctor Spence's coming south. Now, a letter in last mail, from my good friend Doctor Dixon, says that Doctor Marquis is suggesting to you that I be sent to Assembly and they can use Doctor Spence in other ways. That is why I sent the following telegram to you last night, and it expresses my feelings exactly. My sudden desire to go to Assembly was largely that I might meet my son, now in Chicago University, and then go on to a reunion of the old college folks with my wife, who, as you already know, is spending the winter in San Diego. It is Dr. Spence's turn to go instead of mine. He might add dignity to the Assembly, and there's a question as to that in my case. Here is the telegram, and I repeat it because the local office DOES make some wonderful jobs of receiving messages and may do as wonderfully in sending:-

" Nenana, Alaska, January 27, 1921.

Rev. James H. Condit, D.D.,
Juneau, Alaska.

" If Board's request to send me to Assembly means to disarrange plans already made for another man I cannot consider it at all. Please arrange matter as seems wisest to yourself, and that will suit me perfectly. Pass this on to Doctor Dixon, please.

" With cordial greetings,

" Robert Joseph Diven."

I am waiting word about where I am to be located on the coast. I can and will go April first, if you so desire. Wrangell will suit me as well as any other place. I suggested Cordova because of the swarm of old sourdoughs over there -- a great gang of old nuts from here. They need me, I suppose, but that place is very probably filled ere this. Send me to Wrangell. Yes, it is definitely known now, that no more work will be done from this end of the line after this summer. This town will be in a state of suspended animation till the road is completed. Then there will be need of an active man. The property is in good shape. The expense of building and all has not been greater, nor so great, as would have been the hiring of a hall and a manse during my term of service here. You are in possession of a building that is as good as ever it was, ready to go to work again as soon as Interior Alaska begins to breathe again. The country is here and will need the church. Fraternally, DIVEN.

FEB 21 1921

D. L. Dixon
D. L. Dixon

D

Nenana, Alaska, January 28, 1921.

My dear Doctor Dixon:-

I want to thank you for the good intentions evinced in your letter of last night. However, I do not think it wise that Doctor Spence should be shunted aside to set me on the track to Assembly. Doctor Condit, according to a letter of some time ago, had already arranged for Spence to go. The accompanying letter, and copy of my wire ^{sent} on receipt of your letter last night, will explain themselves. I had given up all thought of going to Assembly as soon as I heard from Doctor Condit that he had arranged for Doctor Spence to go. You see, when I passed that suggestion of Marple's on to you, that I go in Marple's place this year, I did not know that Doctor Spence had come down from Barrow. I would never have considered such a thing had I known he was within range of an appointment to Assembly. If I move over to the coast this spring, I'll just leave my connection stand with YUKON Presbytery for two more years and see how the game looks then. Over in ALASKA Presbytery they have the Assembly matter pretty neatly arranged. When a new man comes into the Presbytery or an old one returns, everybody knows that each man already in the Presbytery will go to Assembly before the new man or the prodigal may have a chance to go. Personally and sincerely I think it is real funny. Going to Assembly ^{is} actually regarded a privilege by some of those brethren. I do hope I may someday be able to speak a helpful word for Alaska, whether through Assembly or elsewhere it matters not to me. Twice I gave up my place to the alternate commissioner, because they would be helped in getting to visit old home friends. Each time I have been well repaid by the happiness of the men thus favored. What I used to see so often in the States when commissioners were being elected almost made me hope I might escape ever being a commissioner to Assembly. I shall consent to go, only when there can be no possible question as to my fitness as well as the timeliness of my commissionership. Most cordially, *Dixon*

March 31, 1921.

Rev. Robert J. Diven, D.D.,
Nenana,
Alaska.

My dear old fellow,

Your splendid letter of March 4th, - yes, I mean that, "Splendid!" - has just reached me. I was about to sit down this afternoon at any rate and dictate a letter to you, and now that your letter has come with so many suggestions and so much food for thought, that I do not know how I shall keep it within the bounds of my time. I have a good stenographer, but must finish this in an hour.

At last the Board, at its meeting last week, has definitely given its consent that I should go to Alaska for six months. I expect to start about the 26th of April. I shall stop for a Sabbath in Wyoming - Casper and Cheyenne - and then on to Seattle. I have a lot of boxes, papers, and books to look over there and then shall hike for Fort Wrangell. Here is the plan:-

My primary object in going to Alaska for the summer is to collect data and furbish up my memory and my material for my big book, "Life Among the Thlingets", covering the period from 1878-88, - an autobiographical book giving the beginnings of missions and of civil government in Alaska. I am going to make it just as snappy, frank, funny and serious as I can. It may take me two years to finish it. I am going to try to put it as a serial into the "Outlook" or the "Atlantic Monthly", or some other good magazine.

Also I shall collect material for lectures and for articles for the Board. Our stuff for lectures is stale and out of date, the pictures especially. I shall have another set of illustrated lectures to write for the Board. I am to be hereafter connected with Dr. King's Promotion Department of the Board and shall have more lecturing to do than any other of the Board's officers.

My chief objective, of course, is Wrangell, the old mission. I expect to employ Mrs. Tilly Paul Tamaree, whom I married to Louis Paul in 1882. She will help me collect Indian legends, the history of my struggle with witch craft, the names of the old church members, and refresh my memory about old times. I wish to make the work just as accurate as possible.

I am to take care of the Wrangell mission until you come and then turn it over to you. We are writing letters to all the native missions in Alaska and trying to put over that which ought to have been done several years ago, compel them to make some progress towards self-support.

I shall enclose in this a copy of the letter which will be sent to Wrangell. In confidence I wish to say that Dr. Marquis got me to write these letters to all of the native missions, and he signs them. I had some difficulty in determining just what to assess the Wrangell natives as I do not know the condition of the white church and how many of the natives are left in the Presbyterian fold. You know, of course, that Bishop Rowe lied repeatedly and without conscience to me and to the Board when he said that the Episcopalians would never establish a mission at Wrangell, and then when we let Corser go on account of his general worthlessness, Rowe took him up, ordained him and left him at Wrangell to distract and divide that mission. Corser has not proven a shining success for the Episcopalians any more than he did for the Presbyterians, but he is there, a thorn in our flesh. I hear that the Episcopalians are anxious to get rid of him, but he claims the Episcopalian Church is in his own name and he will not leave unless they pay him his own price for the building. The natives at Wrangell reference me as no other class of beings in the world do, and I have great hopes in getting the most of them back to the Mother Church. I shall also try to get the white church gathered and shall tell them what a great man they are getting in you, and I hope to leave the mission in at least no worse shape than when I find it.

I presume that you can reach Wrangell about July 1st at the earliest, so that I have two full months at Wrangell before you arrive. I hope we may have some jolly, romping canoes and gasoline times together before I go on further.

Now as to the budget, I have just showed your letter to Dr. Dixon and we have talked over the matter of my raising money. We have had to cut down the budgets ruthlessly in all fields, and Alaska as well as the other fields has been hit mighty hard. Kulkwan will not be supplied this year. The salaries will in no cases be cut, but the Indian churches will be required to give up from \$200 to \$300 each; this involving only \$.02 to \$.04 a week per member. You pastors ought to be able to put it through, especially as Dr. Condit is asked to help the pastors so as the Indians will not blame them for the assessment.

Specials cannot be raised through the Board or through the New Era. I am willing to undertake to raise the \$250 you asked for, but I shall do it in my own way, privately, and may not report it at all to the Board. This is Dr. Dixon's advice. I cannot, of course, do anything in that line until I return to the East, which will be probably the last of November. From Wrangell I expect to go to Hydaburg and help there until the new minister, whom we are trying to find, arrives, or if he is too long delayed, I shall go to Sitka and supply that church until Buchanan returns from his vacation. In both these places, as well as in other missions, I shall be collecting material for lectures and for my books.

The Board has granted me a vacation of two months. I expect to take this vacation from about Aug. 15th or Sept. 1st till the time of my return, two months after. I am going to Kenai and Alaska Peninsulas after moose, mountain sheep and the big bears. I do not know that I shall do much mountain climbing, but I hope to get part of this game. If I go, it will be because three or four rich hunters with whom I have been talking and corresponding will pay my expenses on condition of my making all arrangements for them. They will also pay my way back East. Whoop!! Now I long for the time.

On my 66th birthday I got a big carabou head, which is the admiration of all that go into our Assembly Room. I want to put a moose head on the opposite side of the Assembly Room, and if I can kill it on my 74th birthday, it will be all the more interesting. These foolish ambitions somehow grip me, however unworthy they may be. I am enclosing a picture of "the biggest Bear". I used to hunt him ten years ago! but never got nearer than his tracks. My friend, Dr. Chase, got him last Spring, 12 ft. in length, - 1800 lbs. - 18 inches between the eyes - SOME BEAR! If you could come to the westward with me the coming Fall, perhaps we could find again the bear I lost eight years ago. I think he is waiting for me.

To revert to the boat business. There are several at Wrangell which perhaps you can purchase and which you may find to be just what you need. We can work up that boat business after you join me. Principally, I want to get those Indians to come back home to their Mother.

Your idea about the natives of southeastern Alaska and their Brotherhood fits mine exactly. I think too little has been made of their organization and their rights and too much of certain individual Indians. It is easy to spoil an Indian and give him a big head, but it is easy also to stimulate in him loyalty to country and to God and pride in true Christian citizenship. These fellows made good soldiers during the war, and if rightly handled, can progress without limit.

The Presbyterian Church at Metlakatla has about 200 members. There is a division almost 50-50 of the Metlakatla people, each side claims the majority, but I think the Presbyterians have it. We here did all we could do in our position to prevent a split, but it came. Edward Marsten will be given some support by the Board, although not nearly so much as the Presbytery asked for.

I shall not do anything about building the manse at Wrangell until you arrive. I think that your house is a matter for you to plan, and to be there. I shall simply try to gather and unite the natives and the whites and induce them to start their respective church organizations.

As to Nenana and Fairbanks, you will be hearing from the Board that Nenana is left without a pastor for the coming year. However, Dr. Marquis is writing Dr. Condit and advising him to spend the summer in the Interior and to look after Nenana and whatever other points needing attention.

I have very great hopes that under the present administration matters will be very much better. I spent almost a week in Washington City and saw Secretary Falls, Postmaster General Pays, Mr. Cramer of the Prohibition Enforcement Bureau and many other officials, senators and representatives. Of course I am working hard to get Wickersham appointed Governor. Hazelet is a tool of the Guggenheims and was too much implicated in the murder of the railroad men at Nenana for any administration to think of appointing him Governor. McBride, the Chairman of the National Committee for Alaska, is in Washington pulling all the strings he can for Hazelet. Tom Marquam is also in Washington trying to be Judge of the Fairbanks district! The worst pimp, thief, and general rascal in the whole territory! I am satisfied that neither Hazelet nor Marquam will be appointed. However, there is a strong movement on the part of Herron, McBride and others to appoint an outside man as Governor rather than Wickersham. Petitions, however, have been pouring in from all parts of Alaska in favor of Wickersham until more than two-thirds

or probably three-fourths of the voters of Alaska are on the petitions. I have very strong hopes that Wickersham will be appointed. If that is the case, with these two strong men, Wickersham and Sutherland, at the head of things we can get clean and honest men I think appointed to most of the other offices. I am to go to Washington next week and secure a personal interview with President Harding.

I am in hopes that this letter will reach you promptly. I hear that there is only a gap of 85 miles between ends of the railroad and that should facilitate the passage of mail to Nenana. We hear good things about Scherer at Fairbanks, Nickerson at Cordova and Marple at Anchorage.

I have just received from Mr. Childs a check for \$300 for repairs on the Lois.

I have not heard from Kenneth since I wrote you. This is our fault and now Lassie has lost Kenneth's address. I will try to find it again.

Excuse this long letter. I have not said half the things that are in my mind to say to you. You had better address your reply to Wrangell, asking the postmaster to hold until called for.

With rejoicings that we are soon to meet again, I am, as always,

Your devoted friend,

SHY:JD